



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/966,761	10/01/2001	Robert Cregg Barnes	P07353US00/MP	6832

881 7590 04/21/2004
STITES & HARBISON PLLC
1199 NORTH FAIRFAX STREET
SUITE 900
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

EXAMINER

HYLTON, ROBIN ANNETTE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3727

/ 6

DATE MAILED: 04/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/966,761

Applicant(s)

BARNES ET AL.

Examiner

Robin A. Hylton

Art Unit

3727

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 January 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6,8-11 and 14-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2,4-6,9-11 and 14-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 3 and 8 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. Claims 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the claims are rejected for the following reasons:

The actuator's purpose or manner of use is not clearly defined in claim 14.

Dependent claims not specifically mentioned are rejected as depending from rejected base claims since they inherently contain the same deficiencies therein.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1,2,4-6,9-11, and 14-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Polo in view of Pettersen (US 3,419,198).

Polo teaches the claimed container except for the tab extending less than 90 or 180 degrees around the top surface of the container body.

Pettersen teaches it is known to provide a hinged tab having a depressable actuator on a container, the tab extending less than 180 degrees and less than 90 degrees around the container body.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of a smaller tab to the container of Polo. Doing so provides a more stable closure mechanism having greater resistance to being inadvertently torn from the body.

Art Unit: 3727

4. Claims 16, 18, 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen (US Des. 321,788).

Chen teaches a container having an outer wall and an inner wall forming a hollow body, especially when the tabs are closed. A single open tab uncovers an aperture in the hollow body. Chen does not teach a true toroid shaped body.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the inner and outer side walls of a smooth round shape since such a modification would have involved a mere change in the shape of a component. A change in shape is generally recognized as being within the level of ordinary skill in the art.

5. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen in view of Polo.

Chen as modified teaches the claimed container except for concave upper and lower walls of the body.

Polo teaches it is known to provide concave upper and lower walls to a container body.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of concave upper and lower body walls to the modified container of Chen. Doing so provides a more rounded container having no sharp edges.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 3 and 8 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Art Unit: 3727

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Various containers and closures having similar features to those disclosed and/or claimed are cited for their teachings.

9. In order to reduce pendency and avoid potential delays, Group 3720 is encouraging FAXing of responses to Office Actions directly into the Group at (703) 872-9306. This practice may be used for filing papers not requiring a fee. It may also be used for filing papers which require a fee by applicants who authorize charges to a PTO deposit account. Please identify the examiner and art unit at the top of your cover sheet. Papers submitted via FAX into Group 3720 will be promptly forwarded to the examiner.

10. It is called to applicant's attention that if a communication is faxed before the reply time has expired, applicant may submit the reply with a "Certificate of Facsimile" which merely asserts that the reply is being faxed on a given date. So faxed, before the period for reply has expired, the reply may be considered timely. A suggested format for a certificate follows:

I hereby certify that this correspondence for Application Serial No. _____ is being facsimiled to The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office via fax number (703) 872-7306 on the date shown below:

Typed or printed name of person signing this certificate

Signature_____

Date_____

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Robin Hylton whose telephone number is (703) 308-1208. The examiner works a flexible schedule, but can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Eastern time).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lee Young, can be reached on (703) 308-2572.

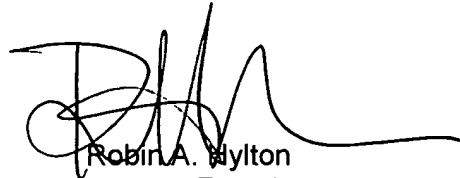
If in receiving this Office Action it is apparent to applicant that certain documents are missing, e.g., copies of references cited, form PTO-1449, form PTO-892, etc., requests for

Art Unit: 3727

copies of such papers should be directed to Technology Center 3700 Customer Service Office at (703) 306-5648.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-1148.

RAH
April 13, 2004



Robin A. Wylton
Primary Examiner
GAU 3727